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THE MATRON.

An ELEGY.

Missus in hanc venio timidi liber rustici urbem ——
De placidam sesse, lector amice, manum.

OVID.

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THE

MATRON.

YE Oaks impervious to the noon-tide ray,
Hoary with grey moſs, take me to your ſhade;
Shield me with friendly arms, from piercing day,
Give me unheard to grieve, unſeen to tread.

Tho' here no mournful cypreſs waves on high,
No plaints of fancied ghoſts the air infeſt;
No ſound the ear, no object ſtrikes the eye,
But aids the quick ſenſations of the breaſt.

That

That Nightingale ſhall make my loſs her theme,
This ſpring that murmurs at each rugged ſtone,
Shall ſeem to weep with ever-trickling ſtream,
The breeze ſhall ſigh, the louder blaſt ſhall groan.

That antique tower, yon Pigeons ſkim around
In echos anſwers: on its ivied wall
Thoſe ſympathizing birds, with ſoothing ſound,
Their plaintive voice ſhall gently raiſe and fall.

She whom I mourn, left like the widow'd Dove,
Meek, gentle, patient, him ſhe lov'd reſign'd;
Nor murmur'd at the ruling hand above,
Whoſe ways oft ſeem moſt harſh when meant moſt kind.

A wretched orphan caught her pitying eye,
'Mid chilling want ſhe heard its little moan;
Snatch'd to herſelf, ſhe bade its ſorrows fly,
Its ſorrows ſoftening ſhe forgot her own.

She led me oft thro' meads with bloſſoms gay,
Each flow'r to name ſhe taught my infant tongue;
And cull'd the varied blooms that bluſhing May,
Or earlier Spring on trembling tendrils hung.

The golden Cowſlip and blue Hare-bell cropt,
Or with the Primroſe, fragrant Vi'lets bound,
Or ſhew'd me Cuckow-pint with purple topt,
Or Wild-roſe with the Woodbine twining round;

Or Strawberries pendant on yon nodding rock,
Their ſcarlet heads bath'd in the burſting rill:
(In ſultry ſeaſons, thither ſtrays the flock;
The Goldfinch dips his wing and ſmooths each quill.)

Oft as we found the Sky-lark's humble neſt,
Or in this grove the Black-bird's unfledg'd young;
She bade in ſafety let the warblers reſt,
Who cheer our rural walks with artleſs ſong.

And ſtill ſhe interpos'd with winning ſmiles,
Whate'er the heart to virtuous habit forms;
Or painted folly ſpent in fruitleſs toils,
And ſenſeleſs paſſion toſt in furious ſtorms.

The monitor that warns the conſcious breaſt,
To hear; its ſacred dictates to await;
Which bid us love the good howe'er depreſt,
And vice deſpiſe tho' cheriſh'd by the great;

The little arts low-thoughted cunning loves,
Its vicious meanneſs and deceit to hate;
That nothing inſincere true wiſdom proves,
That truth is always noble, manly, great;

She taught my opening mind: and much impreſt
The debt to tender ſympathy we owe,
When ſwells with ſighs the feeble human breaſt,
And nature fails beneath her load of woe;

When hard misfortune's preſſure pains the mind,
Gladly to give the comfort in our power;
Nor ſteel the heart againſt our hapleſs kind,
Much taught her precept, but her practice more.

Oft would ſhe watch ſome ſickly wretch's couch,
And from her little ſtore his wants ſupply;
Scanty her all then firſt ſhe felt it ſuch,
And when ſhe gave no more ſhe gave a ſigh.

What time the Eaſt a glowing crimſon bluſh'd,
Or evening dew-drops wept the abſent Sun;
Or ſolitary night, ſerenely huſh'd,
With glittering gems in matchleſs glory ſhone;

What time the Moon ſtole forth and hung on high,
The lamp that burns o'er nature's deep repoſe;
(The lamp that lights full many a tearful eye,
The only witneſs of its ſilent woes,)

The power which ſpoke, and by his mighty word,
The varying ſcenes of earth from chaos rais'd;
The goodneſs, which deputed Man its lord,
Her accents taught, her glowing accents prais'd.

Sincerely good, without the zealot's ſtrife,
The narrow-minded bigot's rage above;
No oſtentation mark'd her uſeful life,
No difference in opinion barr'd her love.

When modeſt merit roſe, ſincere her joy,
The worth that mark'd herſelf forgot alone;
And ſuffering virtue ſhar'd her deepeſt ſigh,
Unheedful of no ſorrows but her own.

Oft as the child of want her cottage ſought,
And did ſome piteous tale of woe impart;
The glow of ſenſibility ſtill caught,
The ſtealing tear diſplay'd—the feeling heart.

To pity prone, her pity ſhe deny'd,
When fell the ſainted villain, virtue's foe;
Who wore her ſacred ſemblance but to hide
A blacker guilt than common villains know.

With no unſocial rigid notions fraught,
Oft the misfortune of the honeſt breaſt;
The chearful tale (ſo happy was her thought)
Grew doubly chearful when by her expreſt.

When pleas'd the youths upon the vocal green,
When pleas'd the nymphs, the rural dance and ſong,
A kind ſpectatreſs of the fairy ſcene,
She ſmil'd, remembering once herſelf was young.

Such chearful manners with ſuch goodneſs join'd,
None ſaw but warmly prais'd, nor prais'd alone,
Inſenſibly they copied, pleas'd to find
That Happineſs and Goodneſs were but one.

And when the ſoul its native region gain'd,
From every interrupting evil free;
All who had known her generous ſorrow pain'd,
All who had known her wept a friend with me.

No black-plum'd hearſe, no midnight-blazing train,
Th' unconſcious earth, back to its earth convey'd;
No falſe encomiums rais'd a juſt diſdain,
Which meant to honour—ridicule the dead.

But artleſs ſwains th' involuntary ſigh,
Still heave as oft as by her door they paſs;
The big tear ſtarts into the virgin's eye,
Bent on her humble grave o'ergrown with graſs.

What tho' no mourner's blacken all the ſtreet,
No hatchment tells its owner is no more,
No vain donations with caprice replete,
Betray the folly of life's lateſt hour:

Yet by her much-lov'd memory ſecur'd,
Her fav'rite trees to rend no hand ſhall dare;
The Martlets to her friendly roof inur'd,
Shall hang their clay-neſts unmoleſted there.

What tho' no ſtone its diſbelieved praiſe,
Affords her 'mid ſome abby's ſacred gloom;
Where marble ſeems in prayer the hands to raiſe,
And frowning warriours preſs the peaceful tomb.

Her turf the whiſp'ring Poplar ſtill ſhall ſhade,
And Friendſhip fancy o'er the hallow'd ground,
The Flow'rets earlieſt bloom and lateſt fade,
And ſocial Robins love to wing around.

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F I N I S.

Yet by her much-lov'd memory fecur'd,
Her lay'rite trees to rend no hand fhall dare;
The Martlets to her friendly roof inur'd,
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What tho' no ftone its dilbelieved praile,
Affords her 'mid fome abby's fretted gloom;
Where marble feems in prayer the hands to raife,
And fhowing warriors prefs the peaceful tomb.

And friendly Ivy o'er the hollow'd ground,
The Yellow rofe earlieft bloom and latefl fade,
And round Robins love to wing around.

FINIS.